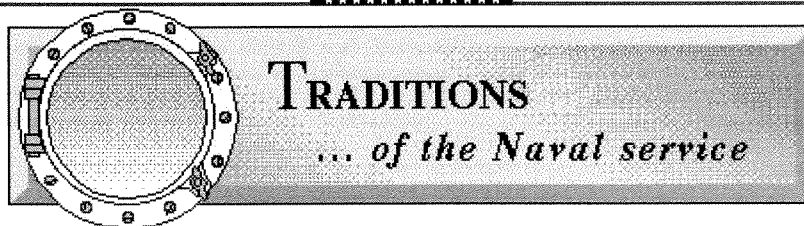


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## Famous Navy Quotes: Who Said Them... and When

*"...without a Respectable Navy, Alas America!"*

**Captain John Paul Jones**, 16 November 1778, in a letter to Robert Morris.

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*"I have not yet begun to fight!"*

**Captain John Paul Jones** said this during the famous battle between *Bonhomme Richard* and *Serapis* on 23 September 1779. It seems that some of Jones's men cried for surrender, but not John Paul Jones! Captain Richard Pearson of *Serapis* asked Jones if he had surrendered. Jones uttered the immortal words: "I have not yet begun to fight!" So, at least, Lt. Richard Dale later recalled.

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*"I wish to have no Connection with any Ship that does not Sail fast for I intend to go in harm's way."*

**Captain John Paul Jones**, 16 November 1778, in a letter to le Ray de Chaumont.

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*"Without a decisive naval force we can do nothing definitive, and with it, everything honorable and glorious."*

**President George Washington**, 15 November 1781, to Marquis de Lafayette.

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*"Don't give up the ship!"*

Tradition has it that **Captain James Lawrence** said these heroic words after being mortally wounded in the engagement between his ship, the U.S. frigate *Chesapeake*, and HMS *Shannon* on 1 June 1813. As the wounded Lawrence was carried below, he ordered "Tell the men to fire faster! Don't give up the ship!"

Although *Chesapeake* was forced to surrender, Captain Lawrence's words lived on as a rallying cry during the war. Oliver Hazard Perry honored his dead friend Lawrence when he had the motto sewn onto the private battle flag flown during the Battle of Lake Erie, 10 September 1813. (William S. Dudley, ed., *The Naval War of 1812: A Documentary History* [Washington, D.C.: Naval Historical Center, 1992] 2: 559)

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*"We have met the enemy and they are ours..."*

**Oliver Hazard Perry's** immortal dispatch to Major General William Henry Harrison after the Battle of Lake Erie, 10 September 1813, "We have met the enemy and they are ours-- two ships, two brigs, one schooner and one sloop." The victory secured the Great Lakes region for the United States and ended the threat of invasion from that quarter. (William S. Dudley, ed., *The Naval War of 1812: A Documentary History* [Washington, D.C.: Naval Historical Center, 1992] 2: 553.)

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*"Damn the torpedoes, Full speed ahead!"*

**Admiral David Glasgow Farragut** (1801-1870). Aboard *Hartford*, Farragut entered Mobile Bay, Alabama, 5 August 1864, in two columns, with armored monitors leading and a fleet of wooden ships following. When the lead monitor *Tecumseh* was demolished by a mine, the wooden ship *Brooklyn* stopped, and the line drifted in confusion toward Fort Morgan. As disaster seemed imminent, Farragut gave the orders embodied by these famous words. He swung his own ship clear and headed across the mines, which failed to explode. The fleet followed and anchored above the forts, which, now isolated, surrendered one by one. The torpedoes to which Farragut and his contemporaries referred would today be described as tethered mines.

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*"You may fire when ready, Gridley."*

**Commodore George Dewey**, 1 May 1898, at the Battle of Manila Bay during the Spanish-American War. The American squadron entered Manila Bay and took fire from the Spanish fleet, anchored under the guns of Cavite, for half an hour until in the position Dewey wanted. Then Dewey addressed his order to Charles Gridley, captain of Dewey's flagship *Olympia*.

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*"A good Navy is not a provocation to war. It is the surest guaranty of peace."*

**President Theodore Roosevelt**, 2 December 1902, second annual message to Congress.

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*"A powerful Navy we have always regarded as our proper and natural means of defense; and it has always been of defense that we have thought, never of aggression or of conquest. But who shall tell us now what sort of Navy to build? We shall take leave to be strong upon the seas, in the future as in the past; and there will be no thought of offense or provocation in that. Our ships are our natural*

*bulwarks."*

**President Woodrow Wilson**, 8 December 1914, address to joint session of Congress.

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*"Sighted Sub, Sank Same."*

Message sent by an enlisted pilot, **AMM 1/c Donald Francis Mason**, on 28 January 1942. Mason believed that he had sunk a German U-boat off Argentia, Newfoundland.

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*"Take her down!"*

**Commander Howard Walter Gilmore**, desperately wounded and unable to climb back into his submarine, *USS Growler* (SS-215), in the face of an approaching Japanese gunboat 7 February 1943.

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*"The battle of Iwo Jima has been won. Among the Americans who served on Iwo, uncommon valor was a common virtue."*

**Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz**, 17 March 1945, CINCPAC Communique No. 300

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*"The Navy has both a tradition and a future--and we look with pride and confidence in both directions."*

**Admiral George Anderson**, CNO, 1 August 1961.

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*"Events of October 1962 indicated, as they had all through history, that control of the sea means security. Control of the seas can mean peace. Control of the seas can mean victory. The United States must control the seas if it is to protect your security...."*

**President John F. Kennedy**, 6 June 1963, on board *USS Kitty Hawk*.

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*"I can imagine no more rewarding a career. And any man who may be asked in this century what he did to make his life worthwhile, I think can respond with a good deal of pride and satisfaction: 'I served in the United States Navy.'"*

**President John F. Kennedy**, 1 August 1963, in Bancroft Hall at the U. S. Naval Academy. (*Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy, Containing the Public Messages, Speeches, and Statements of the President, January 1 to November 22, 1963* [Washington: Government Printing Office, 1964], 620)

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*"We need men and women who by their personal integrity, their sense of moral purpose and their acceptance of the requirement for hard work will exemplify the best in the leadership traditions of the Navy and of our country. This is not 'just another program.' Nor is it a project to breed unthinking conformity to a rigid set of values. It is designed to make us aware of our duties and responsibilities as leaders and to act accordingly. Through this program the already great strength of the Navy will be increased even more, and through it we will respond more effectively to the challenge which confronts our country."*

**Admiral Arleigh A. Burke**, 30 April 1964, OPNAV Information Bulletin.

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*10 August 2001*